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Healthy fats, healthy heart

by Helen Papaconstantinos



Mediterranean omega-3 diet – fish steak, olives, nuts and herbs.

Contrary to what we have been told for over 60 years, saturated fat will not promote heart disease. Nor will fat – despite being high in calories – make you fat. There is an abundance of scientific evidence supporting the view that saturated fat is a necessary part of a heart-healthy diet. Recent studies have exonerated saturated fat from playing a primary role in the creation of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). This is encouraging because, in Canada, heart disease and stroke take someone's life every seven minutes.

The important distinction is to eat 'good' saturated fat and not trans fat. The 'right' type of saturated fats can make you feel satisfied, help you lose weight and even lower your serum cholesterol. Saturated fats may even keep your brain from atrophying or losing structure. Some of these saturated fats also come from plant sources such as avocado and coconut oil. More on this later.

Bad science

How could we get it so wrong? The demonization of saturated fat began in 1953 with Dr. Ancel Keys' publication of a paper comparing fat intake and heart disease mortality. What Ancel Keys and other researchers failed to do was to more carefully evaluate the risks of heart disease by measuring the levels of fructose, omega-6 and trans and saturated fats, separately. Additionally, many of these studies did not take into consideration reducing or eliminating grain carbohydrates or processed foods – both of which are linked to raised triglycerides and inflammation throughout the body. Instead, it established the "lipid hypothesis" – that cholesterol and saturated fat leads to heart disease – as accepted fact.

We now know that Ancel Keys hand-picked the evidence so he could associate heart disease with fat and cholesterol intake. Keys studied 22 countries, but only

focused on the six countries that supported his thesis. The 16 other countries actually disproved his thesis, but he left them out. Unfortunately, this 'bad science' has led to decades of misinformation.

Many of us – researchers and the medical community included – continue to view all low-density lipoprotein (LDL) as 'bad.' As more accurate lab testing for cardiovascular disease risk – such as the small particle LDL test – is adopted by healthcare practitioners in Canada, this stance may soon change.

Eighty percent of all blood LDL is of the large, buoyant type and is considered 'neutral' from the point of cardiovascular disease. According to Robert H. Lustig, author of *Fat Chance: Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease*, there are two types of LDL. Large buoyant LDL – such as the kind you get from dietary fats and egg yolk – floats in the bloodstream and does not damage the arteries.

Small, dense LDL, on the other hand, does not float. It sinks. This type of LDL is small enough to get under the blood vessel cells and cause damage. It can get stuck in a network of sugary proteins called proteoglycans and creates atherosclerosis – scarring and thickening of the arteries – and plaque deposits.

There are at least seven types of fat

Trans fats, Lustig cautions, are problematic because our mitochondria – the energy factories in our cells – cannot break them down completely for energy. The remnants of the oxidized trans fat remain in your arteries and start to inflame and break down the lining.

For the uninitiated, trans fats are 'manufactured' fats. Using heat, pressure and the metal nickel as a catalyst, 'liquid' commercial vegetable oils get hydrogenated and the 'cis' bond is transformed

continued p.6...

Fats and oils for a happy heart

Mercury and contaminant-free wild omega-3 oils do not exhaust our permaculture and superior triglyceride form elongated omega-3 fats are better retained in your tissues when your diet is already rich in saturated fats. Fat expert Robert Lustig puts wild fish and cold-pressed organic flax seed oil at the top of his beneficial fats hierarchy. These oils are anti-inflammatory, lower serum triglycerides and repair membranes in the body.

Healthy, non-processed oils: This domain includes avocados, coconuts, coconut oil and coconut butter. Use coconut oil for cooking, as it is heat-stable and loaded with health benefits. Use extra-virgin olive oil *cold*, drizzled over salad or fish. It is not ideal for cooking as it is easily damaged by heat. Never



purchase "shelf-stable" industrially produced omega-6 oils.

Nuts: Consume unheated, organic nut oils and raw nuts such as almonds, pecans, macadamia nuts and seeds.

Not everyone does well on dairy, but if you are using it, stick with organic whole fat dairy and butter made from raw, grass-fed milk – instead of margarine.

Low-to-moderate amounts of high-quality protein: Eat organically raised, pastured animals and eggs from organic pastured poultry.

Read all food labels: The makers of fat-free prepared meals often add sugar for 'mouth-feel' when oil is removed. It is therefore important for consumers to stay away from prepared, packaged foods or at least to look at nutritional analysis and ingredient labels, as not all calories are created equal.

common ground

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February is Heart Month and in this issue of Common Ground, healthy fats and oils make a fabulous comeback. We focus on nutrition for a healthy heart and dispel some outdated myths about saturated fats; the trans-fats are the real culprits. We also fill our readers in on how important ketones are in our diet. And, of course, we talk about love and building healthy, inter-dependent relationships. Enjoy this issue and spread the love. And remember to love yourself fully in the process.

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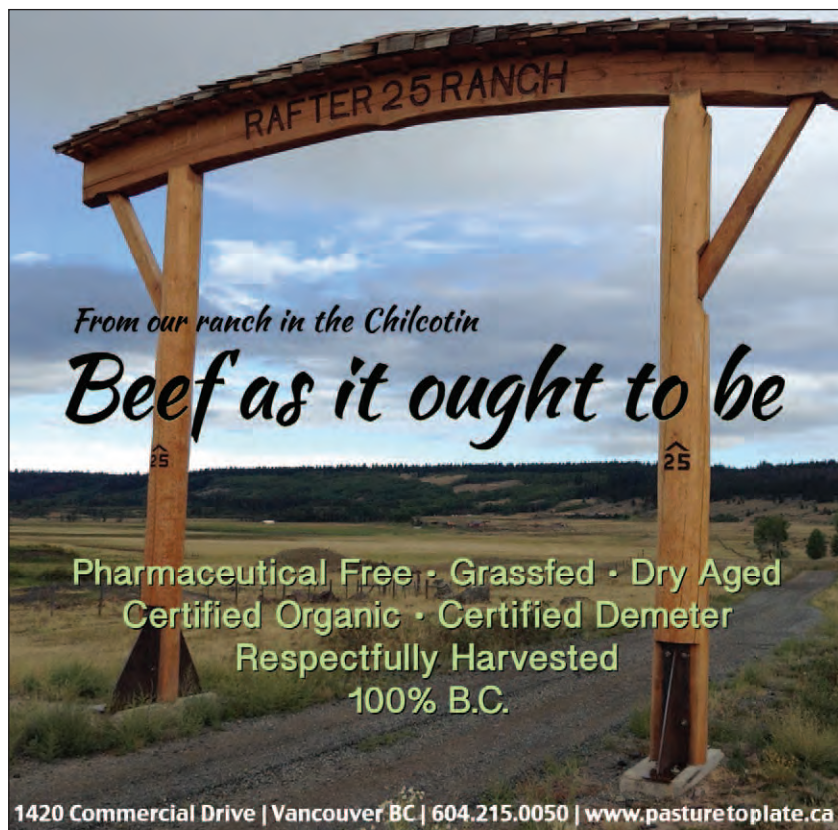
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...Fats from p.3

into a trans bond, a process which hardens the oil so it can remain solid as well as non-perishable at room temperature. While a great boon to manufacturers, it has been linked to hardening of the arteries and cancer.

Many 'liquid' omega-6 fats, such as corn and vegetable oils, can easily oxidize, leading to inflammation and inflexible arteries, all of which can put one at risk for heart attack. It appears that too much omega-6 in the diet creates an imbalance that can interfere with production of important prostaglandins, some of which can help or hinder inflammation.

'Safe' omega-6 fats include organic cold-pressed flax seed oil and high gamma-linolenic oils such as organic cold-pressed borage, evening primrose and black current oils. Olive oil is mainly an omega-9 fat. It contains 75% oleic acid, the stable monounsaturated fat, along with 13% saturated fat, 10% omega-6 linoleic acid and 2% omega-3 linolenic acid. The longer chain fatty acids found in cold-pressed extra-virgin organic olive oil are more likely to contribute to the build-up of body fat than the short-and-medium-chain fatty acids found in butter, coconut oil or palm kernel oil.

Future studies need to consider what people are replacing fat with

When people start to reduce saturated fat in the diet, they often start to increase consumption of refined carbohydrates. A 2010 meta-analysis published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* was the first of its kind to stress the need for future analysis to take this point into consideration.

Part of the confusion about the science around saturated fat relates to your body being capable of making what it needs from carbohydrates. Gary Taubes is a fat expert and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Investigator in Healthy Policy Research at the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health.



Trans fats are 'manufactured' fats... While a great boon to manufacturers, they have been linked to hardening of the arteries and cancer.

In his book, *Why We Get Fat*, he points out, "If you replace the saturated fat in your diet with carbohydrates – replace eggs for breakfast, say, with cornflakes, skim milk and bananas, your LDL (lousy) cholesterol may go down, but your triglycerides will go up and your high-density lipoprotein (HDL) will also lower. For women, HDL levels are so good at predicting heart disease that they are effectively the only predictors that matter."

Whichever diet choices you make, always listen to your body. It will let you know if what you are doing is right for your unique biochemistry and you

can proceed from there.

How much 'healthy fat' and what ratio?

The question of how much omega-6 is permissible depends on how much omega-3 we eat daily. Over the course of the last 4-5 million years, human diets were abundant in omega long-chain fatty-acids such as EPA and DHA from fish oil. By contrast, diets were low in omega-6 fats. Anthropological research suggests that back then we consumed omega-3 and omega-6 oils in a ratio of 1:1.

With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution about 140 years ago – and with that, increased use of cereal grains to feed livestock and production of 'shelf-stable' industrial vegetable oils – there was a marked increase in consumption of omega-6 fats. Today the omega-6: omega-3 ratio of the average western diet is 20:1 and often as high as 25:1.

Paul Jaminet, PhD, author of the *Perfect Health Diet*, and Dr. Ron Rosedale, an expert on treating diabetes through diet, agree the ideal diet includes somewhere between 50-70% fat. Eating that amount of fat will also drastically reduce your grain carbohydrate intake.

Benefits of 'heart-healthy' saturated fat

Besides being a source of energy, when you eat fat as part of your meal, it acts as a carrier for the important fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, as Health Canada points out. Dietary fats are also needed for the conversion of carotene to vitamin A, for mineral absorption and for a host of other biological processes. Palmitic and stearic fatty acids are especially good for your heart. You get stearic

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acid from cocoa butter, chocolate, butter and macadamia nuts. It is also present in poultry, mutton tallow and pork lard. Palmitic fatty acids are derived from palm fruit, however, it can also be found in beef tallow, pastured meats, cheeses, butter and dairy products. Human milk fat contains 25% palmitic acid.

Saturated fatty acids constitute at least 50% of your cell membranes. These fats are what give your cells necessary stiffness and integrity. Indeed, your body *requires* saturated fats from animal and vegetable sources such as meat, dairy, certain oils and tropical plants like coconut for optimal functioning. As fat experts Mary Enig PhD and Sally Fallon Morell point out, saturated fat is actually healthy and humans have been thriving on it for generations.



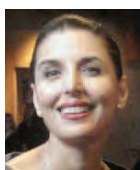
The 'right' type of saturated fats can make you feel satisfied, help you lose weight and even lower your serum cholesterol. Saturated fats may even keep your brain from atrophying or losing structure.

One of the most important healthy saturated fats to include is animal-based omega-3 from fish oil. If you are vegan, one can opt for microalgae oil supplementation. Deficiency of omega-3 essential fat can cause or contribute to very serious health problems, both mental and physical.

Next steps

Besides eliminating processed foods, the following tips can help ensure you're eating the right healthy fats – not only for your heart, but also for your total health. First of all, follow healthy eating patterns. Be sure to eat a diet of whole foods, ideally organic, and replace the grain carbohydrates with large amounts of vegetables. The Mediterranean diet consists mainly of whole, fresh foods like fruits and vegetables, along with fatty fish and unsaturated fats like unheated virgin olive oil. Although it is low in saturated fats, the most significant thing about the Mediterranean style diet is the absence of processed foods, which are loaded with sugars and dangerous trans fats.

Far from harming us, good saturated fats could be the key to keeping us healthy. This month, make sure you eat a natural diet of *real* foods that are zero sugar and devoid of industrial oils and trans fats. Indulge instead in some healthy saturated fats. <



Helen Papaconstantinos offers nutritional consulting through her holistic nutrition practice. She is also a research specialist for the Institute of Holistic Nutrition in Vancouver (www.instituteofholisticnutrition.com) Reach Helen at helen@insightfulnutrition.ca and via www.insightfulnutrition.ca

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GMO BITES

GMO Inquiry 2015

GMOs have been in our food and environment in Canada for 20 years It's time to investigate their real impacts and risks

The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) has launched a major public investigation to dig behind 20 years of uncertainty around genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food and farming in Canada. The project will be called GMO Inquiry 2015.

"We're stepping up with our own inquiry because our government doesn't track the impacts of GM crops and foods in Canada," said CBAN Coordinator Lucy Sharratt. "Our government doesn't even tell us where GMOs are on our grocery store shelves. After 20 years of secrecy and confusion, Canadians deserve some real information about the impacts and risks."

Our government doesn't track the impacts of GM crops and foods in Canada or where GMOs are on our grocery store shelves. After 20 years of secrecy and confusion, Canadians deserve some real information about the impacts and risks.

In 1995, the Canadian government approved the first genetically modified (GM), also called genetically engineered (GE), crops and foods: eight herbicide tolerant canola varieties as well as the first GM soybean (also herbicide-tolerant), two types of GM delayed-ripening tomatoes (both withdrawn from the market by the companies) and the first varieties of Monsanto's GM insect resistant potatoes (also later withdrawn from the market by the company).


"Our government introduced genetically modified crops without a public debate or any GM food labelling for consumer choice," said Taarini Chopra, also of CBAN. "It's time we get to the truth about how GM technology is changing food and farming in Canada. Critical questions about the impacts of GMOs on our health, our environment and our economy remain unanswered."

CBAN will publish new research throughout the year, examining the major questions of environmental, economic and health impacts of GMOs in Canada.

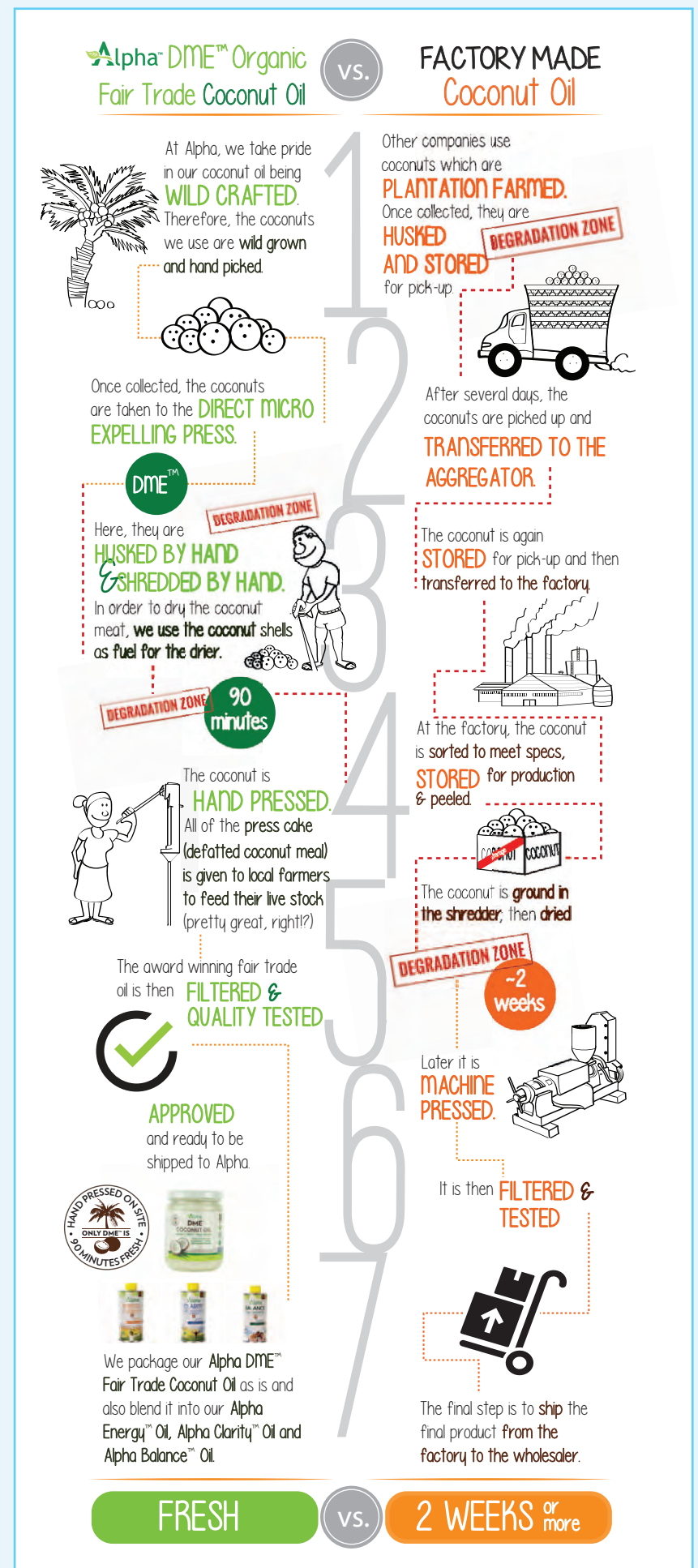
In 2015, CBAN will investigate:

- Where GM foods and crops are found across the world and how much is grown in Canada.
- The impacts of GM crops on the environment.
- The issues raised by GM foods for consumers, including safety.
- The impacts of GM crops on farmers.
- The state of GMO regulation in Canada.
- Whether or not we need GM crops to feed the world.

CBAN invites Canadians to send in their questions to help shape the inquiry at www.GMOinquiry.ca

CBAN notes its inquiry is urgent because the government has already approved GM 2,4-D and dicamba-tolerant crops and could soon approve unprecedented GM foods, including the first-ever GM apple and the first GM food animal in the world, GM salmon. 

GMO Inquiry 2015 (www.GMOinquiry.ca) is a project of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), www.cban.ca CBAN is a campaign coalition of 17 organizations that researches, monitors and raises awareness about issues relating to genetic engineering in food and farming. CBAN members include farmer associations, environmental and social justice organizations and regional coalitions of grassroots groups. CBAN is a project of Tides Canada Initiatives.





Steps for a healthy heart

February is Heart Month, an optimum time to care about your heart. While death rates due to cardiovascular disease have dropped – in part because many people are adopting lifestyle changes that reduce their risk – heart disease still remains the #1 killer. Every seven minutes, a Canadian dies from heart disease or stroke and, according to Canada's Public Health Agency, related costs are over \$22 billion per year.

The American Heart Association has conceived a strategy to prevent whole populations from experiencing heart attacks, echoed by Canada's Heart and Stroke Foundation and the World Health Organization. If followed, the priority steps below will reduce the risk of this tragedy for you and your loved ones.

Priority steps to reduce the risk of heart attack:

1. No smoking.
2. Maintain a healthy weight. (Search online for a BMI calculator.)
3. Be active. The criteria are moderate; walk 22 minutes a day.
4. Follow a healthy diet; consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day; eat legumes and whole grains; drink less than three sodas a week.
5. Keep cholesterol below average. Aim for below 5.2 mmol/L.
6. Keep blood pressure below average. The target for most people is less than 140/90 mmHg.
7. Maintain blood glucose levels within optimal range. For people not diagnosed with diabetes, this is usually between 4.0 and 8.0 mmol/L.

Prevention of heart disease on a population-wide basis led to the seven modest steps listed above yet only one American in 2,000 had all seven factors intact. Most challenging was step 4: following a healthy diet. Can Canadians do better?

Various levels of preventative medicine have been outlined, including trying to avert a first heart attack in someone with heart disease, attempting to avoid the next heart attack, trying to reduce the resulting complications, and doing one's best to reduce the damage from all the drugs and surgery in the first three levels. Better still: prevent heart disease in the first place!

As Dr. T. E. Kottke from the Mayo Clinic wrote in the *American Journal of Cardiology*, "Gone are the days when the corpulent physician, dropping cigarette ash down his gravy-stained vest, could credibly prescribe a change in behaviour.

Heart disease still remains the #1 killer. Every seven

minutes, a Canadian dies from heart disease or stroke...


and related costs are over \$22 billion per year.

Doctors need to role model healthy behaviour." And while some MD's are fine role models, food and nutrition are not core subjects at medical schools.

Certain hospitals do have lifestyle programs that can help. One example is Vancouver's St. Paul's Hospital, which has a Healthy Heart Program Prevention Clinic (604-682-2344, ext. 68611). The YMCA also offers Healthy Heart Programs in several locations. See www.vanymca.org/health/healthyheart.html

Another resource is CHIP (Complete Health Implementation Program), which offers courses in White Rock and Burnaby as well as physician Werner Spangehl's course that supports lifestyle change, including an excellent video series, food demos, discussions and support materials. Dr. Spangehl is the author of *One Minute Medicine* (www.oneminutemedicine.com).

For information about CHIP, email chipwhiterock@gmail.com In Burnaby, Salvator Cabatic's CHIP program begins in February. Email salcabatic@gmail.com For other areas, search www.chiphealth.com/LocationSearch/

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Vesanto Melina is a BC-registered dietitian. Her **Becoming Vegan: Comprehensive Edition** (with Brenda Davis) is one of REAL's Top Ten Books of 2014. Their more condensed version, **Becoming Vegan: Express Edition** won a 2014 Canada Book Award and numerous other accolades. www.becomingvegan.ca.

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Ketones for health



Good fats make a fabulous comeback

My interest in ketones was stoked by the positive results people with Alzheimer's were achieving by combining coconut oil and medium chain triglycerides (MCT) oil. My father had come up with a formula and was selling it, but he couldn't say how it worked. Dr. Mary Newport, author of *Alzheimer's Disease: What If There Was a Cure? – The Story of Ketones*, used the same formula with her husband who had early onset Alzheimer's. She connected with Dr. Richard Veech, a senior investigator in the Intramural Research Program (IRP) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), who enlightened her to the power of ketones.

Ketones have the advantage over glucose in that they don't require insulin to drive energy creation. That makes ketones particularly useful in circumstances of insulin resistance, like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and ALS. Recent work indicates ketones may prove to be beneficial in cases of MS and glaucoma.

Eating ketogenically creates lean bodies and has been shown to reduce chronic inflammation. It offers amazing benefits for those with type 2 diabetes, restoring insulin sensitivity and potentially reversing the disease. Combined with calorie restriction, it is an effective treatment for can-

cer that can work in conjunction with standard oncology.

When certain fats are disassembled in the liver, the basic molecular units formed are energy units for the body. Fat is, after all, nature's most potent form of energy storage. Whereas one gram of carbohydrates

Ketones have the advantage over glucose in that they don't require insulin to drive energy creation.

or protein will generate four calories of energy, one gram of fat generates nine. When a bunch of those energy units are created all at once, they acidify the local environment in the liver. To get the body back to homeostasis, two of these units are hooked together, forming a ketone.

A ketone is water soluble, allowing it to be transported in the blood. It can also cross the blood brain barrier, which makes it a suitable fuel for the brain. Scientists used to think the brain could only use glucose as fuel. But then the question arose: "What happens during times

of prolonged fast?" It turns out the brain uses ketones to fuel its activities.

One way of generating ketones is to ingest medium chain fats or alpha linolenic acid (ALA), the parent omega 3 fat found in camelina, chia and flax oils. Straight MCT oil creates ketones fastest, but they also diminish quickly. If ketones are not used to create energy, they are expelled from the body through respiration or urinary elimination. That's right; you eat certain fats and when you don't need them, they leave.

Another way of generating ketones is to change your eating patterns. While there is a variation of what is termed ketogenic in the scientific literature, if you consume 75% of your daily energy as fat – particularly medium chain and omega 3 and 6 – 15% as proteins and 10% as carbohydrates, you will be in a state of ketone creation, or ketosis. You will be training your body to create energy from fat, rather than glucose.

Ketogenic eating is not the same as a paleo diet or Atkins. The first difference is there are no imposed restrictions in ketogenic eating other than maintaining the carbohydrate and protein targets. Limited protein is the biggest factor that sets ketogenic eating apart from the Atkins diet. Excess protein is turned to fat, creating stinky nitrogenous waste.

With ketogenic eating, you get to eat what fits you. You can be vegan – although this will take some work – vegetarian or omnivore. You can be dairy free or gluten free, whatever suits you best.

The biggest drawback to ketogenic eating is the love affair our culture has with carbohydrates. Most traditional breakfast foods require carbs, as do the majority of snacks. It is challenging when eating out to avoid sugars or starches. Some planning for success is required. The benefits of a reduced waist size, reduced inflammation, clearer thinking and more energy are certainly worth it. ◀



Chris Gursche is in charge of product development at Alpha Health Products (chris@alphahealth.ca). He is currently publishing a ketogenic cookbook, **Ketogenesis, 30 Days to a New, Thinner, Healthier You**, which can be pre-ordered at ketogenesis.ca

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Women and antidepressants

Caution:
addiction ahead

Why are so many women taking antidepressants and what does this say about one of medicine's biggest questions? It's a problem that's been growing for decades and shows very few signs of improving. Let's strip this issue down to a few bare essentials.

Q: So what is the problem?

A: For some reason, people in Canada are taking a ton of antidepressants, especially women. If you know four women between the ages of 25 and 55, on average, one of them will be on an antidepressant. That's right; 25% of working age women will be taking a drug like Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Effexor or Cymbalta. Overall, about one in 10 Canadians are taking antidepressants, making Canadians the third highest consumers of antidepressants in the world. The growth in the use of antidepressants has escalated so much over the last 20 years it begs us to ask why.

Q: Is there any easy answer to this?

A: It comes down to how prevalent we think mental illness is among women. I'm thinking of the diagnosis of clinical depression, the key reason these drugs are prescribed. Let's be clear; for many, life can be stressful and difficult, especially those facing serious

challenges, including harassment, violence, economic distress, helplessness, isolation or having grown up in a climate of fear or abuse. For many women – and I will focus on women – there are also the stresses of normal family life in juggling careers, relationships, children and aging parents. It's clear we need effective ways to help those who feel life's burden is just too heavy. Even though the drugs – the SSRIs and SNRIs mentioned above – are designed for people with serious clinical depression, they seemingly get used for everyone who is distressed and having trouble coping.

Q: Why is that?

A: This is a complex question. Part of it, certainly, has to do with the way the pharmaceutical industry has marketized and characterized both the disease and the drugs. For example, in Japan, after the introduction of SSRI medications in 1999, the word for clinical depression, “*utsubyou*,” was dumped in favour of the term “*kokoro no kaze*,” which literally means “a cold of the soul.” This simple renaming of the disease – equating depression with the common cold – dropped it to the lowest common denominator, absolutely exploding the antidepressant market in Japan. Similarly, “depression” was recharacterized in the Western world in the early 1990s by the drug companies

– and their helpful ‘partners’ in psychiatry – who saw it as a “deficiency state” and proposed the solution: a drug to raise a patient's serotonin levels. This idea that depression is a “chemical imbalance” is a theory that has never been proven though it has gained traction by implying that depressed people are chemically deficient, akin to diabetics who lack insulin.

Q: But these drugs are still widely prescribed and people seem to think they need them. Why?

A: That also needs unpacking. If you are told you have an illness, the only solution proposed is to “see your doctor.” Every day, Canadian doctors face patients with emotional problems. A generation ago, they would have been prescribed barbiturates or anti-anxiety drugs like Valium or Ativan yet the main flavour today just happens to be SSRI antidepressants. If you've lost your job, your spouse or a loved one, it is normal to feel sad and “depressed.” If you can still function, most of the research shows your symptoms will typically go away on their own with family support and some professional counselling. But if your emotional state is due to isolation and loneliness, shouldn't it be a ‘social’ solution you need? We do ourselves incredible harm when we discount the incredible health benefits of meaningful work, good friends and a community of people who love and care for us.

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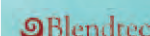
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Q: Is it really that simple?

A: Almost. But sometimes people are in crisis. Again, the “see your doctor” plan seems the only game in town even if diving straight for the chemical ‘cure’ – while convenient and simple – is possibly the wrong thing to do. For some with serious depression, however, the pill might help ease the symptoms. Certainly, the attention and care of a sympathetic physician who assures you “you will get through this” is often all that’s needed. Many of us feel a prescription validates our illness. I know many people will swear by the drugs, telling themselves they couldn’t live without them, but the placebo effect is powerful medicine; a large body of research has shown that the placebo effect is as effective as antidepressants in helping relieve symptoms.

Q: But let’s get back to the reason so many people, especially women, are taking antidepressants. What else is going on?

A: The simple answer – let’s call this Alan’s punch line – is that some drugs are very difficult to stop once they’ve been started. Since SSRIs work by stimulating the serotonin system, they can lead to anxiety, agitation, thinking about suicide and even greater depression. The main issue is if you’ve been on the drugs for a while and want to quit, well, let’s just say you’re likely in for a ride. No one should ever try to stop taking an SSRI immediately because stopping suddenly is hell for many people. Stopping abruptly can cause symptoms to come back with a vengeance, causing many people incredible withdrawal effects including the electric ‘zaps’ that seem to jolt you so horrifically it’s easier just to go back on the pill.


Sometimes, people will be prescribed even heavier medication when their withdrawal symptoms are bad, probably the exact opposite of what they need. The key reason people stay on these drugs so long is that they tried to stop and the withdrawal was so dreadful they kept taking them. If you want to stop taking an antidepressant, Google CWHN and “no quick fix.”

Q: Alan Cassels, you’re not a doctor but if you were, what would you suggest for what is termed “mild to moderate” depression?

A: An excellent question and you’re right; I won’t dispense medical advice. Yet as a researcher I know there are many non-drug alternatives that work for many people. Talk therapy works, as does vigorous exercise, which is probably the first thing you should try if you’ve reached the point where you’re seeking medical advice for depression. And exercise can be free. Walking, cycling, running or dancing – anything that gets your blood moving fast and your heart working – will benefit every system in the body, improving mood, sleep, energy and general fitness. Those effects last longer, don’t come with the many adverse effects of SSRIs and are more sustainable over the long term. The good thing about exercise is that while it may also be addictive, this kind of addiction can lead only in the right direction.

Q: I want to know more. Where can I go for more information?

A: I’d start with the Canadian Women’s Health Network, the best-quality, home-grown institution we’ve got, driven by women who know the science and can see through the pharmaceutical industry’s spin. The CWHN has probably the highest quality information about women and antidepressants in Canada, if not the world. Unfortunately, last year their funding was cut by the Harper government, but their site at www.whp-apsf.ca is still operating. If you find their information useful, I would strongly urge you to make a donation. A big one. You also have to check out Robert Whitaker’s work and his “Mad in America” website (www.madinamerica.com), which is probably the most evidence-based, critical source of information on mental health treatments going.

Correction: Last month, I said Canadians will consume \$36 billion worth of prescription drugs this year, but that figure includes prescription *and* non-prescription drugs. Prescription drugs only consume about \$28 billion a year. Sorry for the confusion. Many thanks to Dr. Joel Lexchin – his fabulous book on Canada’s drug industry is coming out soon – for rapping me on the knuckles. 

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria; he works with unions to help improve drug benefits for their members and with doctors and researchers trying to find ways to reduce the harms related to overprescribing, especially in the elderly.

February 7: Alan Cassels speaks at the Health, Wellness and Sustainability Festival in Victoria. www.healthandwellnessfestival.ca

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“If you loved me, you would agree with me and you would want what I want and think like I do.”

That’s what many of the distressed couples I see in my practice equate with love. These couples tell me they feel connected, loved and supported when they have minimal differences between them, when there is no disagreement and when they have the same level of desire for closeness.

When there are differences and disagreements, people complain of feeling invalidated, unloved and misunderstood. However, what gets in the way of most people having a good relationship is not their differences, but rather their inability to manage the fears and anxieties that arise when another thinks differently and has divergent desires, likes, wants and opinions. There is a deep existential anxiety that gets triggered in people when they realize their partner, child or another close to them is a different person and not an extension of themselves.



When we need agreement in relationship, our love becomes conditional and is really more about co-dependency, emotional fusion and collusion. It says, “If we agree, I’ll support you, but if we don’t, I’ll withdraw.” It is a connection that does not allow for individuality.

Jealousy is a prime example of differences being intolerable. There is no acceptance of separateness or boundaries. Part of the reason for this is that when differences arise, they are often experienced and interpreted as an assault. They are taken personally to mean that one of us must be wrong and/or we don’t care about the other person.

Although Abbey enjoys her in-laws, she doesn’t want to take every holiday with them. When she shares this with Stewart, he interprets this as Abbey not caring about him because she should know his parents really matter to him. He’s unable to hear about her desires and wishes because he feels so hurt. He also feels distressed because of his own thoughts and interpretations that Abbey doesn’t want the same thing.



Rhonda and Dylan have always enjoyed their nightly reunion with a glass of wine and updates of the day. Now, five years later, with Rhonda’s new lifestyle changes, she’s giving up drinking. Although Rhonda still looks forward to and delights in their nightly rituals of connection, Dylan is becoming increasingly sarcastic and ridicules her choice to stop drinking. This is creating conflict. The truth is Dylan is afraid. He fears that Rhonda’s new habit is the beginning of her moving away from him. He worries she would not want him as much if he doesn’t change the way she did. Unless he faces his fears and insecurities, Rhonda *will* withdraw from him, not because of his drinking, but because of his sarcasm and meanness towards her.

Unless we can accept that our partner or others we love are different from us, we are not really loving them. Rather, we are using them to meet our own need to be validated in order to satisfy our own insecurities and to receive the unconditional love we may not have received as a child.

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by Claire Maisonneuve

is a connection that does not allow for individuality. It’s more like a dictatorship than a democracy.

The challenge of marriage is the constant juggling act between preserving our individuality and sharing greater intimacy. Between holding on to who we are as we evolve and fulfilling our desire for togetherness. Between connection and separation.

True connection requires emotionally distinct people. Having clear boundaries and not being afraid to speak your truth is what allows you to move closer. When we are too afraid to disagree, face conflict, speak our truth and hold our own, we lie, play games and become dishonest.

This is usually when couples show up for therapy. One partner is simply trying to find their way towards reclaiming or establishing a stronger sense of individuality while the other partner does not want the change because the increasing differences feel like a threat.

I try to explain to couples the struggles they are going through are not indicative of a bad marriage or incompatibility. Instead, it’s the normal, natural evolution of their relationship. They are having challenges in juggling the need for autonomy and intimacy. It’s normal.

Sadly, however, many couples miss the point that their relationship is a laboratory to help through the growing pains of basic human challenges. This challenge includes the need to be respectful, kind and considerate of people’s differences.

When Abbey first tried to express her desire to Stewart, she did it with criticism and judgment. She would ask, “Do we really need to have your parents with us again?” Or she would say, “I can’t believe I have to put up with this. I didn’t sign up for this.” None of which were clear expressions of her desires or her ongoing love for Stewart.

When she learned to speak to Stewart in a way he could hear that she cared about him, but she wanted something different, they were able to negotiate their different desires. What she said sounded something like this: “I know how much your parents mean to you and this matters to me because I care about you. I’m happy to have them come on holidays with us sometimes. But I would really like some quality time with just you and our children. Let’s figure out a way to navigate both our desires.”

Notice what happens for you when someone you love wants something different from you. If you notice any resistance or negativity, you might want to examine the thoughts you have that may be creating fear. Then ask yourself, “Does what they want really matter to me? Am I willing to make space for their differences to show them I care about them?”

Claire Maisonneuve, MA, is a registered clinical counsellor and the director of the Alpine Clinic in Vancouver, www.anxietyandstressrelief.com



This game of life

Life is to be lived, not controlled; and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat. — Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man

Games involve challenges, be they sports, board games, card games, video games or televised survivor games. We enjoy the challenges and often try to improve our skills so we can conquer those challenges. If we are not overly competitive, we can even laugh at ourselves like I did when my four-year-old grandson annihilated me at Wii. I could not even stay on the track.

Sometimes, a young child who is frustrated because he/she is losing a board game will suddenly flip the board over, abruptly ending the game. The vision the child had of how the game should go did not materialize and he fell apart.

As we grow, we generally learn not to over-identify with the outcome of a game. We learn that sometimes we win, sometimes we lose, but it is all part of the game. A more confident and self-assured individual does not equate a game outcome with his or her self-worth.

**Life is about experiencing, changing and growing...
out there on the field and embracing the game.**

Life can be viewed as a kind of survivor game in which we are presented with challenges or problems we must solve. If we looked at life this way, we would not be upset or surprised by challenges. We would expect them and when they arrived, we would immediately start to form a strategy for dealing with or solving the problem.

Over time, we would, as in a video game, have mastered the lower level problems to a degree that they would not cause stress or upset; we would just take those things in stride. Unfortunately, most do not view life this way because their inner child is still at the level of wanting to “win” and views setbacks as negative events thwarting the vision of how one’s life is ‘supposed’ to be. Challenges are taken personally: “Why do these things happen to me?”


In this ‘game,’ the opponent is not another player, but life itself. Time, energy and emotion are devoted to fighting life. A 10-year old client described how at recess the boys all fought because all the good players were on one team. They argued and argued about it. No one tried to find a solution.

This is not surprising because children generally don’t have role models that calmly try to generate solutions to issues that arise. Rather, they see the people around them having emotional reactions to things that happen.

Different religious or philosophical perspectives emphasize the point there is no use fighting against that which we cannot control. Marianne Williamson says there are only two things in life you have to know: The first is “God’s plan works.” The second is “Yours doesn’t.”

The Buddhist philosophy says all human suffering comes from attachment. We get attached to things or people being a certain way. Since we cannot have any control over outcomes, we suffer. Viktor Frankl argues that, when we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.

Life is about experiencing, changing and growing. It is about being out there on the field and embracing the game – not sitting in the stands and being mad, sad, angry, resentful or disappointed when the play does not go our way.

A shift in perspective can happen in an instant, make a world of difference and last a lifetime. The choice is ours. 

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, “Deep Powerful Change” hypnosis CDs and “Creating Effective Relationships” series, visit www.gwen.ca



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Qigong

for mind, body & spirit health

by Shauna Mullinix

There are three threads constant to all forms of Qigong: breath, posture and mind (intent)

The healing art of Qigong has been practised in China throughout many millennia. Like all practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Qigong places the harmony of Qi at the centre of well-being, health and longevity. The Qi of the human body is harmonized within the context of, and in relationship to, the energies of heaven and earth.

There are two characters that make up the word Qigong. The first, “Qi,” may be simply defined as energy, but in the context of Qigong, it may be more completely understood as the vital force that creates, motivates and sustains the universe. Humans live within and are sustained by this vital force – they are also comprised of it. The second character, “gong,” may be translated as cultivation, attainment or exercise so Qigong may be defined as energy exercise or vital force cultivation.

Throughout thousands of years of empirical study and practice, hundreds of forms of Qigong have been designed to meet the needs of a variety of human conditions, preferences and objectives. Qigong exercises fall into several major categories. Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian Qigong were developed with an emphasis on enhancing spiritual health, although both emotional and physical health could be improved as well.

Medical Qigong was developed with an emphasis on treating diseases of the organ channels by balancing the Qi of the body, mind and spirit. It may also be used in Traditional Chinese Medicine as part of treatment protocols. Other categories of Qigong are designed to increase one’s capacity to absorb healthful Qi from nature – in particular from trees, the Sun and the Moon. Related exercises are designed to strengthen the ability to emit healthful Qi for treatment of illness.

Finally, Qigong plays an important role in martial arts. Many consider internal martial arts forms, such as Taijiquan, to be both a martial art and moving Qigong. Iron Shirt Qigong strengthens the body and develops the ability to concentrate Qi in susceptible areas, shielding the body from strikes.

There are three threads constant to all forms of Qigong: breath, posture and mind (intent). While attention to any one of these three threads will improve health and well being, in Qigong, all three are woven together with synergistic effect.

Focus on the first thread begins with becoming deeply familiar and present with the breath – observing the flow of inhale and exhale, becoming aware of the quality of the breath and noting when breath is being held. From this presence with the breath, practitioners may easily return to natural breathing or as the Tao Te Ching reminds, “Breathe like an infant.” Natural breathing is also called abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing. In this form of breathing, the diaphragm is engaged and the lower abdomen expands on inhale and relaxes on exhale. Using natural breathing as the normal resting breath impacts one’s health dramatically and positively. It is known to relax the nervous system, reduce anxiety, regulate blood pressure, improve digestion, enhance the quality of sleep and clear the mind. More advanced Qigong practices may require other breathing techniques, such as reverse or alternate nasal breathing, but natural breathing is always returned to at the end of these exercises.

The second thread is posture or body alignment. Attention to proper alignment is one of the great benefits of practising Qigong. This is true whether the Qigong is a stationary or moving form or done standing, sitting or lying down. Developing a sense of structural sensitivity and allowing the body to return to its natural alignment helps open gates of energy flow often locked by habitual misalignment. Emphasis is placed on relaxing and unlocking chronically closed areas such as ankles, knees, hips, shoulders and, most critically, the lumbar spine (Mingmen – Life Gate). When the body is properly aligned, energy can flow freely through the gates, washing away stagnation and filling the channels with healthy Qi. Through Qigong practice, old habits of imbalanced postures are broken and the body is freed to return to a more harmonious structure. Muscles are engaged properly and strengthened, chronic joint pain is

relieved and body fatigue is lessened.

Mind (intent) is the third thread woven through all Qigong exercises. Qigong classics instruct that where the mind goes, Qi follows. For example, a scattered, busy mind leads Qi erratically away from natural pathways. Dizziness, lack of focus, anxiety and poor sleep are physical manifestations of this. Conversely, a relaxed, alert and appropriately focused mind allows Qi to freely follow natural pathways. Balance, focus, calmness and good-quality sleep are some physical benefits of this. A relaxed, alert and appropriately focused mind is the foundational accomplishment of this thread of Qigong practice.

Mind may be expanded from the foundational accomplishment through many Qigong practices, again making use of the concept that Qi follows mind. In some Qigong, mind leads Qi down from heaven or up from earth into the body, augmenting Qi of the body. Some Qigong practices would use mind to direct Qi away from the body and into the earth, pushing toxins out of the body. In other Qigong, mind leads Qi to specific areas in the body to bring healthy energy to fill a deficiency or wash away stagnation.

In many Qigong forms, mind imbues Qi with qualities such as healthiness, kindness, colour, temperature or sound, enhancing the effects of the Qi. There are also Qigong practices where mind may simply observe, devoid of intent. In any Qigong, it is important to remember it is only a recommendation and individuals should be encouraged to adapt this to their own belief system, spiritual practice and instinct.

Qi flowing in the body is always ready to return to harmony within as well as in connection to heaven and earth. The simple practices of Qigong utilizing breath, posture and mind, practised regularly, are effective in supporting Qi in that return to harmony. ■

Shauna Mullinix is an instructor of Taijiquan and Qigong at the International College of Traditional Chinese Medicine and a registered acupuncturist. www.tcmcollege.com



Earth warmer as oil price drops

With oil prices having plunged from more than \$100 a barrel last summer to below \$50 recently, the consequences of a petro-fuelled economy are hitting home – especially in Alberta where experts forecast a recession. The province's projected budget surplus has turned into a \$500-million deficit on top of a \$12-billion debt, with predicted revenue losses of \$11 billion or more over the next three or four years if prices stay low or continue to drop as expected. Alberta's government is talking about service reductions, public-sector wage and job cuts and even increased or new taxes on individuals. TD Bank says Canada as a whole can expect deficits over the next few years unless Ottawa takes money from its contingency fund.


More cars and trucks could be on the road, which is good for the auto industry but bad in terms of pollution, climate change and traffic accidents.

It's absurd that a lower price on a single commodity could have such a profound economic impact, but that's what happens when you put all your eggs in one basket and fail to plan for such contingencies. With a population and oil-and-gas production profile similar to Alberta, Europe's largest petroleum producer, Norway, is also feeling the impacts. But much higher taxes on industry, majority state ownership of the country's largest oil-and-gas company and an approximately \$900-billion sovereign wealth fund built from oil revenues are cushioning the fall.

Some see low fuel prices as good news, but there are many downsides. With driving becoming less costly, more cars and trucks could be on the road, which is good for the auto industry but bad in terms of pollution, climate change and traffic accidents. And because the price of oil is now lower than the cost to extract oilsands bitumen, the industry is starting to put the brakes on rapid expansion plans – bad news for workers and businesses in Fort McMurray and those heavily invested in the industry, but good news for the planet.

Recent research shows most of Canada's oilsands bitumen – as well as all Arctic oil and gas, most of Canada's coal and some conventional oil and gas – must be left in the ground if the world is to avoid a global temperature increase of more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the internationally agreed-upon threshold for limiting catastrophic impacts of global warming... The study also found that carbon capture and storage, touted as one way to continue exploiting and burning fossil fuels, is too new, expensive and limited to make enough of a difference by 2050...

With 2014 confirmed as the hottest year on record and 13 of the hottest 15 years having occurred since 2000, we can't afford to ignore the consequences. According to researchers, the odds that natural variability is causing today's climate change are less than one in 27 million. It's astounding that, in the face of such overwhelming evidence from scientists worldwide, people continue to deny the problem exists or that humans are responsible and can or should do anything about it.

It's especially irresponsible when energy conservation and cleaner fuel alternatives offer so many economic benefits, including job creation, greater stability and reduced health-care costs. As world leaders prepare for the UN climate summit later this year, we must look at the recent market meltdown as an opportunity to shift away from fossil fuels. It'll be much easier and less costly to get on with it now than to wait until we're left with few choices. 

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation senior editor Ian Hanington. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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Pro-privacy legislation a priority

Six months ago, we argued that Canadians faced a stark privacy deficit – a perfect storm of spy agency surveillance, privacy-undermining legislation and lax privacy safeguards at government departments, sparking concern from citizens right across the political spectrum.

Sadly, the situation has further deteriorated. The government's surveillance Bill C-13 became law. The Supreme Court ruled that police don't require a warrant to search the cell phones of people they arrest. The private tax information of hundreds of Canadians was leaked to the CBC. And the government is building a powerful new system to collect and analyze what Canadians are saying on Facebook.

These developments have prompted debate about what it will take to truly safeguard Canadians' privacy in a digital age. Our organization has spent the past few months crowdsourcing ideas from Canadians and it's clear a great deal can be done to tackle our privacy deficit:

1. Stronger warrant requirements: Government authorities have long been expected to obtain a search warrant to access citizens' sensitive, personal information. Recent developments have undermined this safeguard, including lower warrant thresholds in Bill C-13, the Supreme Court's recent cell phone privacy ruling and the government's Bill C-44, which makes Canadians living overseas vulnerable to surveillance.

Future privacy legislation should require a warrant for government authorities to monitor the personal information of Canadians at home or overseas. This common sense step would significantly strengthen privacy protection for all Canadians.

2. End the mass collection of metadata: Thanks to Edward Snowden, we've learned the "Five Eyes" spy

alliance, of which Canada's CSEC is a key part, collects deeply revealing communications metadata on a mass scale. To safeguard privacy, we need legislation to prevent agencies like CSEC obtaining Canadians' metadata without a warrant or court order. (<https://openmedia.ca/csecandyou>)

It's an election year and decision-makers in all parties have a clear incentive to take a pro-privacy stance. Voters should be wary of politicians who "talk the talk" on privacy without committing to the concrete steps.

3. Oversight and review of spy agencies: The Snowden revelations have also focused attention on the lack of effective oversight to hold spy agencies accountable to Parliament. Liberal MP Joyce Murray and Conservative Senator Hugh Segal have each proposed stronger powers of oversight and review over CSEC's activities. These steps would bring Canada into line with its global counterparts and should form part of any future pro-privacy legislation.

4. Tightening voluntary disclosure rules: There has been a lot of concern about telecom providers 'voluntarily' disclosing personal information about their customers to governments and other entities. In a landmark win for privacy, the Supreme Court ruled last June

that government agents need a warrant to obtain this information. However, the government's Bill S-4 could see Canadians' personal information disclosed without any oversight, to third parties, including US copyright trolls. This loophole must be closed.

5. Accountability for privacy breaches: Privacy breaches at government departments have become worryingly commonplace, affecting over 725,000 Canadians, including high-profile figures like Margaret Atwood and Jean Chretien. New safeguards should require government agents at all levels to document all activities, decisions and processes that could impact the privacy of Canadians.

These proposals should form the core ingredients of any future legislation that purports to safeguard the digital privacy of Canadians. This is a practical agenda, but given the power of entrenched security bureaucracies, it will require significant political will to implement.

That said, it's an election year and decision-makers in all parties have a clear incentive to take a pro-privacy stance. Voters should be wary of politicians who "talk the talk" on privacy without committing to the concrete steps detailed above.

We'll continue to work alongside the large, non-partisan Protect our Privacy Coalition to ensure Canadians have the strong privacy safeguards they deserve.

Learn more at <http://ourprivacy.ca> 

Steve Anderson is the executive director of OpenMedia.ca, a community-based organization that safeguards the possibilities of the open Internet. **David Christopher** is the communications manager at OpenMedia.ca. A version of this piece originally appeared in the CCPA Monitor www.policyalternatives.ca/monitor/index.php

photo by Stan Shebs



Seedy Saturday at VanDusen

by Suzette Meyers Curtain

"It all started here, in the Floral Hall, over 20 years ago. That was 1990 and the very first Seedy Saturday in Canada took place in this very room."

That's one of the many interesting things Master Gardeners learned about the history of seed saving in Canada from uber-seed-saver Dan Jason during his talk at the annual GM of the BC Council of Master Gardeners at VanDusen Garden. Jason started one of Canada's first completely organic seed companies, Salt Spring Seeds, 28 years ago.

Turns out British Columbian Master Gardeners have been instrumental in kick-starting the seed saving movement in this country (and beyond). Now there are over 100 individual Seedy Saturdays annually across Canada alone. But history was not a key aspect of Jason's speech.

Instead, he made MGs aware of the crucial work being done now to save heritage, non-GMO contaminated seeds before it's too late.

"Due to industrial agriculture and the corporatization of seed companies around the world, there already is heavy contamination of corn, canola and other seeds; you just can't find those seeds without genetic modification anymore because of how easily crops get tainted," said Jason.

Genetically modified crops are a problem both for the farmer and the environment, as "they require higher and higher inputs of the pesticides and herbicides that companies like Monsanto produce. Soon the soil is depleted and the farmer's ability to raise anything without genetic modification is gone."

Not to mention the major concerns *continued p.22...*



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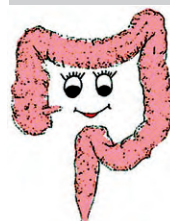
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- **William James**

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...Seedy from p.18

consumers have about ingesting genetically modified foods; we know it's in many, if not most, of our pre-packaged foods. A massive push is underway to force food producers to label GM foods on packaging, but Monsanto and others are pushing back just as hard to avoid that.

Meantime, who is preserving the untainted, healthy seeds? According to Dan Jason, it's a core group of about 1,000 dedicated souls around the globe who volunteer their time and expertise in creating seed banks and growing out non-GMO, heritage seeds. But they need help – lots of it.

"It's not enough really; it's a fragile system, especially for the more rare varieties – very few people are growing them out, which is the crucial part. It's not going to help in the long run to only save the seeds in a bank somewhere. The plants must be grown out so they

Genetically modified crops...

require higher and higher inputs of the pesticides and herbicides that companies like Monsanto produce.

can adapt to the changing climate. Otherwise, you'll just have seeds that won't be viable down the track."

That's where individuals with experience, such as MGs, can come in. "Master Gardeners know about soil issues and propagation; it's all about the health of the land. Growing things that support the bees, for example. There is a huge upsurge of people saying we have to protect this planet for our kids."

For those who want to get involved in preserving this precious resource, a good starting place is at Seedy Saturday, an event held in many communities across the province.

Or what about starting your own Seed Library? Jason says it the newest concept in seed saving circles at the moment.

"Basically, you go to your local library and ask for some shelf space. It's dry there and very public of course – plus no one is making money from this. It's a way of keeping seeds in the public domain in a very low-key way."

February 28: Seedy Saturday, 10AM-4PM, VanDusen Botanical Garden, 5251 Oak St. @ W. 37th Ave., Vancouver. vandusengarden.org

The war on understanding cancer



Deceit and greed the hallmarks of a century-long sham

Devra Davis, PhD, was the founding director of the Center for Environmental Oncology, University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute and a professor of epidemiology at the Graduate School of Public Health (2004-2010). Her 2007 book, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*, traces a sickening, century-long pattern of public relations deceit, academic timidity and media collusion that has kneecapped scientific research and promoted public confusion about this disease.

Davis details how the “astounding alliances” between academics and people with vested interests in selling potentially carcinogenic materials have kept the public in the dark about risks to their health.

An aging population does not explain why five times more adults get brain cancer in the US than Japan. It does not account for a 50% rise in testicular cancer in men under 40 in most industrialized nations, in the space of a decade. Nor does it explain why, as Davis writes, “...women of Generation X are getting twice as much breast cancer as their grandmothers did.”

The author’s own father died of multiple myeloma, a cancer of the bone marrow. She observes that, between 1973 and 1983, the incidence of the disease doubled for men aged 55 to 59.

While our culture celebrates the incremental successes in treating or managing different forms of the disease, we shrink from asking difficult questions about cancer risks that don’t involve personal lifestyle choices.

In her book, Davis tells the tale of the long-forgotten 2nd Conference on Cancer, held in Basel, Switzerland, in 1936. The author had seen citations for this event, but the actual papers from the conference seemed to have gone down an institutional memory hole. With the help of a reference librarian in Wyoming, she located and requested the transfer of a three-volume set archived in a library in Belgium.

“I thought I would learn how naive the world of cancer research had once been. But after the books arrived, I spent a sleepless night fascinated by the sophisticated drawings and advanced research techniques that were employed to unravel the causes of cancer before I was born,” she writes.

In the early years of the 20th century, researchers had tracked cancer risks by gender, age and occupation. They knew that radiation, tobacco, asbestos, pesticides, benzene and other chemicals were carcinogenic.

Ironically, many of these discoveries were made in Germany under the Nazi regime, which was bent on maximizing Aryan health even as it targeted European Jewry for ghettos and death camps. “Men were advised to get their colons checked as often as they would check the

continued p.27...

by Geoff Olson



Devra Davis’ book, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*, traces a sickening, century-long pattern of public relations deceit, academic timidity and media collusion that has kneecapped scientific research and promoted public confusion about this disease.

On a cold, grey day in December, I dropped into a North Shore hospice to visit a friend. As he reclined in a wheelchair in the common room, a violin quintet played holiday standards. I slid into a free chair between him and his father to take in the remainder of the performance. In a quiet voice, my sick friend began to sing along to *Hark, The Herald Angels Sing*.

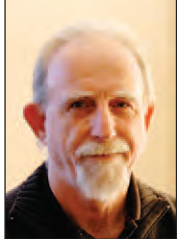
My friend and neighbour was both a gentleman and a gentle man. A high school science teacher and father of two, he raised bees and drove an electric car quieter than a sewing machine. He didn’t smoke, drink to excess or even use a cell phone. He was all about healthy living, sustainability and helping out his neighbours. Thanks to him, my wife and I were able to grow our own vegetables after he built an extra garden plot for us in his backyard.

I have lost a disturbing number of friends and acquaintances in the past year and a half to cancer. Two had been diagnosed with glioblastoma multiforme, the most malignant form of brain tumour.

Cancer is not of recent vintage, as indicated by fossil evidence of a dinosaur that suffered from a bone tumour 150 million years ago. If you manage to survive other age-related ailments, there’s a good chance that some form of the disease will get you in the end; it is a predictable, if ironic, result of life extension.

Yet my neighbour was only 33 when he was diagnosed with cancer. Over the past 20 years, there has been a 22% increase in brain tumours in the US population, according to statistics from the National Cancer Institute. And here is the kicker: in the last 20 years, the incidence of brain tumours has reportedly increased by 35% in children younger than 15.

The *Lancet* predicts a global increase in overall cancer rates by more than 75% by 2030.



StarWise

February 2015

"STAR LIGHT, star bright, the first star I see tonight; I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight." If ever there were a star to wish upon, it will rise just after sunset on February 3. In western tropical astrology, the Moon conjoins with Jupiter in Leo just hours after the full Moon on February 3. Full moons are auspicious and Jupiter is known to grant wishes.

It gets even more interesting when we switch over to the sidereal Vedic system of astrology. Instead of the Moon being in Leo, it drops back to Cancer, which is the Moon's own sign; it is also the sign of Jupiter's exaltation in which it has much more freedom of expression to wield its power and influence. If I were to make a wish, I would certainly pay attention to this lovely conjunction of the Moon and Jupiter.

Let's go a little deeper into it. The ancients created the nakshatras or Moon mansions. They are the star groups that the Moon travels through each day. The ancients realized that certain phenomena happened as the Moon visited the 27 different nakshatras. It just so happens the Moon will be visiting the nakshatra called Ashlesha when she joins up with King of the Gods Jupiter, granter of boons, prayers and wishes. The Vedic astrologers teach us that Ashlesha connects us to our dharma, which is the impetus to do good and benefit others. Ashlesha carries mystical and magical powers and there is nothing more powerful than the power of prayer, especially when done sincerely from the heart. If you miss the boat or the opportunity to make your wish, you will have another chance on March 2 – especially at 08:52 PM (PST) when the Moon and Jupiter embrace once again in the southeastern sky.

Those among us who are more spiritually inclined might get a strong charge out of this powerful conjunction, as Ashlesha also grants spiritual enlightenment. Venus and Mars, the traditional planets associated with love, attraction and desire, are moving through Pisces and it is another harbinger of affection, attraction and love. Karma drives the wheel and we only get to go with the people with whom we have strong karmic bonds. On a broader level, we might want to pray for world peace and for Lord Jupiter to grant some compassionate love and care for souls that are suffering. Our compassionate father cannot resist our cries for help and like the mother with her baby, must come and soothe and feed her little one.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.



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**ARIES** Mar 21 - Apr 19

On Saint Valentine's Day on February 14, we make our declarations of love. But wait! There are better days to make this display of love. February 20 and 21 are special days as Venus, Mars and the Moon align in Aries creating a cosmic mix of powerful, magical and mystical energy especially designed for lovers.

**TAURUS** Apr 20 - May 21

King Solomon said there was nothing new under the Sun. It's highly likely the new love that shows up in your life this month is a very old connection from the hoary past. People from the past are destined to come back into your life now, lovers or not. Career and social activities are featured now.

**GEMINI** May 22 - Jun 20

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread" is probably a good line to start the forecast. Take your time searching for that special partner. He/she is likely to show up now especially while traveling or in the work place. All the more reason to walk, don't run. An exciting month unfolds its potential.

**CANCER** Jun 21 - Jul 22

An inheritance might be in the wind and you might be in the wind as well. Travel is highlighted this month, as is spirituality. An inheritance is what is warranted to come one's way from past life associations. The time has come this year to move closer or away from someone close to you.

**LEO** Jul 23 - Aug 22

Read the introduction regarding the Leo full Moon on February 3. It's your time to wish upon a star. It is also your time to truly move towards your goals, dreams and whatever else you aspire towards. Nurture and nature are key ingredients to your success; without them, you cannot go very far.

**VIRGO** Aug 23 - Sep 22

Van Morrison's Moondance fits the mood for the February skies as Venus and Mars cast their magical energy into your sign. "Well, it's a marvelous night for a Moondance with the stars up above in your eyes..." But if romance is not in sight, use this energy to brighten and beautify your life however you can.

**LIBRA** Sep 23 - Oct 22

The last 10 days of February and early March heat up as Venus, Mars and Uranus move closer together in your opposite sign Aries, promising action, attraction, fire and desire. Changes come quickly, surprises as well, and you might not mind. Creativity is at a peak. You might be restless and excited.

**SCORPIO** Oct 23 - Nov 21

Saturn has stepped away, probably to your relief. He's moved into Sagittarius and will be back for his final visit in mid-June until mid-September. No doubt, he has brought some powerful lessons regarding discipline and frugality. He demands we live with less. You can breathe easy now and enjoy some light, laughter and love.

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22 - Dec 21

Saturn is not the planet that Sagittarius enjoys all that much. He's such a party pooper with his stern and stringent ways. You may have to put the party gear away for a while whilst you figure how to go and what to do. Career, health and relationship topics will need some serious attention now.


**CAPRICORN** Dec 22 - Jan 19

The Moon visits Capricorn on Saint Valentine's Day placing you in your lunar high of the month. You might be flying high as the course of events from February 14 to 16 could have you in a spin. You can expect things to not go as planned as the stars are indicating a surprise or two.

**AQUARIUS** Jan 20 - Feb 19

The Full Moon on February 3 will illuminate the areas of your life that have needed clarity. Mercury is retrograding in Aquarius until February 12 and will need several more days to get up to speed again. Use this time to reconsider and rethink the plan. Patience and persistence and more patience are needed.

**PISCES** Feb 20 - Mar 20

Venus and Mars spice things up nicely until February 20. Venus brings creativity, attraction and love. Mars brings excitement and action. The Pisces New Moon on February 18 signals a new start in a new direction. Pay attention to your dreams, as they will be loaded with important symbolism that will help you see the play. 

Winter festivals

beat the blues



These friendly giants at Ocean Concrete on Granville Island are silos transformed by Brazilian artists OSGEMEOS. Photo courtesy Granville Island.

Winter festivals, like winter gardens, can flourish here on the west coast and, to put it mildly, they're quite unlike other winter celebrations throughout the rest of Canada. Two of the best-known and much-loved local varieties – Winterruption and Festival du Bois – have grown steadily over the years and having reached maturity are now ripe for the picking. With something to appeal to every taste, age and interest, they're also easy on the budget and best enjoyed in groups. Both take place this month.

The 10th annual version of Vancouver's favourite winter festival, Winterruption (February 19- 22), is bigger, better and most certainly more colourful than ever.

Winterruption

For a decade now, folks have been gathering on Granville Island to beat the blues in an aptly dubbed communal feast for the senses. The 10th annual version of Vancouver's favourite winter festival, Winterruption (February 19- 22), is bigger, better and most certainly more colourful than ever. Music, art, dance, theatre, film, food and family fun are served up west coast style with delights and surprises around every corner – most of them free of charge.

It all takes place at the feet of the recently arrived technicolour 'Giants,' Ocean Concrete's six massive

silos, now transformed into the largest outdoor mural ever created by Brazilian artists OSGEMEOS. See for yourself and take a giant selfie. Learn more about these remarkable Sao Paulo artists in the documentary film, *Grey City*, at Emily Carr University Theatre (matinees and eventing screenings offered) or attend a Mini Giants workshop and create your own work of art to take home.

That vibe carries on with the infectious vocals, irresistible rhythm and inspired lunacy of Brazilian-born, BC based, guitarist-singer-percussionist, Celso Machado. Bossa Nova anyone? Coastal Jazz will present live music all weekend, including the hip-shaking, party-starting, Motown-inspired northern soul of the Ballantynes and mountain country special guests Miss Quincy and the Showdown. There's everything from the Czech-based melodies of Aram Bajakian and Julia Úlehla's Dálava to Waxwing and Willa with DJ Blondtron.

See the full schedule of music, events, exhibit and activities at www.winterruption.com, including Kid's Stuff and the Meet Your Makers Tour: Spirits, Sake and Hand Crafted Beer.

Festival du Bois

Everyone needs to share in some old-fashioned *joie de vivre* at this time of year and folks will find it in abundance at Festival du Bois. This annual festival is hosted in Maillardville, BC, a community rooted in our French-Canadian heritage and history. From February 26 to March 1, festivalgoers will gather under the big roofs of the festival's heated tents, including the massive *Grand Chapiteau* (main tent), *Tente des Enfants* (children's tent) and the popular *Tente des Ateliers*

(workshop tent).

BC's largest and most popular celebration of francophone music, dance, craft, food and culture is presented in a program rich in visual arts, kids' activities and a world-class performance roster. Kick up your heels to Québécois, francophone, folk, world and roots music artists, including *Les Chercheurs d'Or*, *Bardefou*, *Le Bal a l'huile*, Nova Scotia-based songwriting legend Lennie Gallant, Celtic fiddle phenom Jocelyn Pettit, veteran children's singer-songwriter-storyteller Charlotte Diamond and award-winning Aboriginal singer Wesley Hardisty. This music showcase is one of the most impressive, enjoyable and infectious you'll find anywhere.

Attractions include Michel Campeau, a Longueuil region wood carver who will complete an eight-foot wood sculpture during the festival – destined to become a permanent feature in Mackin Park at 1046 Brunette



Lennie Gallant is one of the attractions at Festival du Bois

Avenue (across the Lougheed Highway from IKEA).

Festival du Bois (February 28-March 1) is high calibre, community based, entertaining, affordable and family-friendly. Wander the expansive park site, learn about Maillardville and sample tourtière, maple taffy on snow, homemade poutine and other francophone fare. Festival schedules and full information available at www.festivaldubois.ca General info: 604-515-7070, info@maillardville.com

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola-Island based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of **Our Clinic**. brucemason@shaw.ca

BC's cleantech industries cleaning up in more ways than one



A 50 kilowatt turbine manufactured by Surrey-based Endurance Wind Power, one of the world's leading manufacturers of smaller turbines for local power generation. From a one-room office and six employees in 2007, it now houses 155 people in a 45,000 sq.ft. state-of-the-art facility. (www.endurancewindpower.com)

While still under the radar of our senior governments and corporate media, the world is awash in cleantech. From San Francisco to Singapore to Surrey, cleantech expos and forums have sprung up, offering snapshots of an evolving global tapestry of innovation. At one time, an Internet search for cleantech would turn up local janitorial and carpet cleaning services. Now, one is rewarded with numerous webinars on biofuels and chemicals, new power generation and ways to improve efficiency and bottom lines while shrinking carbon footprints. Good news.

The first-ever Greater Vancouver Clean Technology Expo late last month included a mini-refinery that produces high quality biodiesel from renewable feedstock sources, roofs made out of waste limestone and recycled plastic that sell for a fraction of the cost of natural slate and cedar, a wireless crop-health monitoring system and electricity from the natural flow of rivers – with no dams, diversions or harm to ecosystems and recreational areas.

Forty companies from across the region gathered at the new Surrey City Hall Atrium to demonstrate technology, take part in workshops and share information with fellow innovators, future investors and curious folks who see the folly in continuing to extract and sell

finite resources.

Recently elected Mayor Linda Hepner reports, “Surrey is Canada’s fastest growing city and home to 10% of BC’s Clean Technologies and we are committed to supporting and creating a vibrant innovation ecosystem across the Greater Vancouver region.”

Surrey is also home to a number of innovative enterprises, including the Foresight Cleantech Accelerator Centre, designed to help clean technology companies grow; Powertech Labs, which employs the highest number of PhD-level scientists in BC outside of the post-secondary system and companies such as Endurance Wind Power, a homegrown wind turbine engineering firm. From a one-room office and six employees in 2007, it now houses 155 people in a 45,000 square-foot state of the art facility and has a fleet of turbines, which can be found in more than 750 locations worldwide, including the US, UK, Italy and Canada’s Maritimes.

Clean technology, or “cleantech” – still synonymous with “greentech” in many minds – is new technology. Related business models provide solutions to global climate or resource challenges – or the much ballyhooed desire for energy independence – while offering competitive returns for customers and investors. Canada’s economic growth potential through clean energy is

huge, but it requires the same priority status that government extends to other industries.

The day before the Expo in Surrey, the BC Sustainable Energy Association staged a webinar entitled “Tracking the Clean Energy Revolution – Boutique Goes Big.” It reviewed reports from late 2014 about the global shift to renewable energy sources such as wind, sun and water. Investment since 2009 – roughly the same as agriculture, fishing and forestry combined – in the energy generating capacity of wind, solar, run-of-river hydro and biomass plants has expanded by 93% and employment, approximately 40%.

In Japan, former Fukushima employees are flocking to solar power. And below our border, that sector grew 20 times faster than the national US employment rate. Worldwide, 6.5 million people are employed in the booming clean-energy sector.

Once categorized as the proverbial “hewers of wood




Once categorized as the proverbial “hewers of wood and drawers of water,” Canadians can no longer just be considered “drillers of oil and frackers of gas.” People who work in green energy now outnumber those whose work relates to the tar sands.

and drawers of water,” Canadians can no longer just be considered “drillers of oil and frackers of gas.” People who work in green energy now outnumber those whose work relates to the tar sands.

In 2011, clean energy supply and storage, clean transportation, green building and energy efficiency was responsible for more than 123,000 jobs in BC, equal to those created in tourism and six times the number of jobs in oil, mining and gas. That number is growing rapidly.

Cleantech may not be the answer to all our problems, but it’s a sector that offers huge promise for the growth and health of our economy and environment.

There is no BC information clearinghouse, but in upcoming issues, *Common Ground* will feature some of the advances being made in our region, along with the exciting events, people and stories that make cleantech a clear winner. 

engines of their cars,” noted historian Robert N. Proctor in his 2000 book, *The Nazi War on Cancer*. Dangerous chemical additives such as food dyes, pesticides and preservatives were restricted or banned. The Germans also invented the term “passive smoking” and tightly restricted tobacco advertising.

At the close of World War 2, Robert R. Kehoe, an army captain and spy working for the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), ventured across Germany gathering information on chemical and hormonal hazards for the US Army Field Investigations Unit and the British Secret Service. “Sixty years later, these files remain unpublished,” Davis writes.

Postwar, global chemical and manufacturing industries would employ the same tactics of denial and deceit that US tobacco companies would use in the service of smoking. Scientists who pursued the truth were frequently dissuaded by subtle and not so subtle pressures, including the threat of research funding cuts. In some cases, entire lines of investigation were walled off and scientific careers derailed, as in the case of Wilhelm Hueper, a pathologist who investigated occupational tumours and became professionally radioactive after reporting the health risks of uranium mining.

Bizarrely, the Canadian federal government still allows the export of asbestos, a substance the Hitler regime understood to be a dangerous carcinogen. For over a century, a similar blindness has blessed the industrial use of benzene, a known leukemia vector for factory workers. In 1989, Myron Mehlman, a toxicologist with Exxon Mobil, told Japanese officials that gasoline with 5% benzene represented a significant health threat. The company fired him for his insubordination.

Today, the entire cancer awareness and treatment industrial complex is predicated on chasing elusive, post facto, pharmaceutical silver bullets. Preventative measures are mostly limited to advice from health care providers and media sources about lifestyle choices involving smoking, diet and exercise. God forbid that anyone opens the Pandora’s box of corporate responsibility for cancer’s rise.

This constriction of knowledge is not surprising, considering a number of leaders in the so-called war on cancer across Europe and North America have secretly worked for the chemical industry for years, consistently neglecting to disclose their ties when advising government on issues impacting their benefactors.

Throughout the 1980s, the National Cancer Institute’s advisory board was chaired by Armand Hammer, the CEO of Occidental Petroleum. His company “pro-

duced more than 100 billion tons of chemicals, including those that created the superfund toxic waste site at Love Canal and led to the contamination of lush Mississippi River delta towns in Calcasieu Parish,” notes Davis. “Similar conflicts continue today.”

The vast majority of the 100,000 chemicals used in industry and commerce have never been tested for health effects. Among those tested and suspected of being carcinogens, many circulate freely in the environment and into our bodies, unchecked and unregulated. Some of the makers of these substances own companies that produce pharmaceutical drugs used in the treatment of cancer.

Good examples of this boundless cynicism are found



Why are we losing the war on cancer? It’s because our best and brightest have been institutionally blindfolded and gagged by moneyed interests for decades so the global population can be used as lab rats in an uncontrolled but very profitable health experiment.

in the numerous walkathons and cycle rides for cancer, often sponsored by companies involved in the manufacture of products or services implicated in the disease. It’s the arsonists acting as the fire department.

This is not just about chemistry. “Modern America’s annual exposure to radiation from diagnostic machines is equal to that released by a nuclear accident that spewed the equivalent of hundreds of Hiroshimas across much of Russia and Eastern Europe,” Davis claims.

According to figures from the Society for Pediatric Radiology, a typical CT scan can be the equivalent of 400 to 6,000 chest X-rays. The following was published in a 2013 article in *Scientific American*: “Researchers at the National Cancer Institute estimate that 29,000 future cancer cases could be attributed to the 72 million CT scans performed in the country in 2007.” The article noted that the extrapolation of radiation data drawn from Hiroshima victims to medical imaging patients is a

subject of much scientific debate.

With cancer on the rise like a pathogen in a Michael Crichton novel, our mainstream press seems remarkably incurious. A recent CBC digital headline announced, “Two-thirds of cancers caused by bad luck, not genetics & environment.” The news item cites a report published in *Science*, which stated the majority of cancers arise from random mutations arising from cell division.

Intriguingly, “breast and prostate cancer were excluded because the researchers were unable to ascertain reliable stem cell division rates.” So two of the biggest killers of North American female and male populations, respectively, were left out of the study, with the links of environmental toxins to breast cancer left unaddressed.

The CBC story is likely to leave readers with the impression that cancer sprays the population indiscriminately like an escaped firehose. While it’s true scientists cannot always predict what combination of mutagens will affect which genes and how, they certainly detect patterns over time and isolate likely suspects in the material world, as in any other forensic investigation. It’s what epidemiologists often do.

“Sometimes cancer is due to a genetic susceptibility that we get from our fathers or mothers, but mostly it isn’t. We know that no matter how careful anyone is about their good and bad habits, where and when we are born and what we work and play with has a lot more to do with whether we get cancer than who our parents happen to be,” the author writes.

Why are we losing the war on cancer? It’s because our best and brightest have been institutionally blindfolded and gagged by moneyed interests for decades so the global population can be used as lab rats in an uncontrolled but very profitable health experiment.

As a single data point, my neighbour’s cancer has an unknown and unknowable origin, even as it’s added on to an increasingly bent distribution curve. But as one more victim of the disease, the 34-year-old leaves behind a wife, a two-year-old son and a four-year-old daughter. May his two lovely children grow up in a world that awakens to the professionally curated ignorance about the “emperor of all maladies” – a world that finally comes to terms with the human sacrifices made to The Almighty Dollar.

In memory of Gordon Trousdell, Ralph Maud, Bryant Knox, and Brian Savage. ❏

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FEB 11

Presentation & Booksigning: Melissa Joy Jonsson talks about her new book *M-Joy Practically Speaking: Matrix Energetics and Living Your Infinite Potential*. Learn to access your unlimited potential and apply it in your daily life. 6:30PM, Banyen Books, 3608 West 4th. Ave., Vancouver 604-732-7912.

FEB 11 & MAR 4

Fast and Healthy: Raw Food Entrees – \$40: Spaghetti & “meat” balls, pad Thai, surprise dessert! 7-9:30PM, EternalAbundance.ca 1025 Commercial Drive, 604-707-0088.

FEB 13-15

The Wellness Show: Helping You Find Balance – Exhibits, seminars, cooking, demos, prizes & more. Vancouver Convention Centre, East Building, Exhibit hall B&C. Event info: www.thewellnessshow.com or 604-983-2794.

FEB 13-16

The Matrix Energetics Experience: Free introductory lecture: Feb. 13, 7-9PM. / Feb. 13-16: Fundamentals Intensive + ME & Unplugged: Spatial Clairvoyance. Instantaneous and life-long transformation. With Melissa Joy Jonsson & Dr. Richard Bartlett. In Vancouver. Info/Registration: www.matrixenergetics.com, 800-269-9513.

FEB 16

Optimizing Brain Function by Addressing Adrenal Dysfunction: With Dr. Jason Marr, ND, Evoke Integrative Medicine. At Park Inn, 898 W. Broadway, Vancouver Meeting Room. 7-9PM, \$10. Register at www.orthomolecularhealth.com or call 416-733-2117. Hosted by Orthomolecular Health.

FEB 17

Trust Your Intuition! Be True to Yourself: With Mandana Rastan, Coast Tsawwassen Inn, 7:30PM, 1665 56 Street, Delta, \$21/door. www.innerpeacemovement.ca 1-877-969-0095. Contact mrastan@shaw.ca for future workshops.

FEB 20-22

Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Friday Introduction 7:30PM, \$10; Course \$395 + GST.

Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

FEB 21-22

T & T Spiritual & Wellness Connections: 4th Annual Psychic & Wellness Fair. Readers/Healers/Vendors & Seminars, Best Western Coquitlam, 319 North Rd. Coquitlam, BC, Sat: 10AM-9PM. Sun: 10AM-4PM. www.tandtvanancouver.com/www.facebook/tandtconnections

FEB 22

Adventure into Time and Beyond with Rifa Hodgson presents Past Life Regression Workshop – Rediscover Your Hidden Talents and Gifts. 10:30AM-1:30PM, West Vancouver. Ambleside, rifa@lifebetweenlives.ca http://www.lifebetweenlives.ca/past_life_workshops_events.htm 1-888-606-8463.

FEB 27-MAR 1

A New Consciousness for a New Earth: A retreat based on the recent teaching of Eckhart Tolle (www.eckharttolle.com). At Swanwick Centre, near Victoria. To register, email swanwick@shaw.ca or call 250-744-3354. www.swanwickcentre.ca

FEB 28

An Aboriginal Wellness Event: Everyone welcome. Gabor Mate speaks on “Recovery: Finding the True Self” (10AM). \$15, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, 1607 E. Hastings, 10AM-4PM. Cultural activities, vendors, lunch, readings, massage & more. Register online www.urbanspiritfoundation.com

MAR-APR

Andean Wisdom Teachings with Jhaimy Alvarez-Acosta from Cusco, Peru. Workshops, retreats, talks & personal healings. Vancouver www.childrenofthe7rays.com – 778-279-7234.

MAR 1

Join Don Jose Ruiz in Vancouver for an evening of self-discovery and transformation. As part of the Toltec Rattlesnake Book Tour, Don speaks about ancient Toltec Wisdom. At Inner Evolution, 3263 Heather St., Vancouver. 7-9PM, \$55. Book signing after lecture. Tickets at www.migueldruiz.com

MAR 4

Clearmind presents: Intimacy – The Final Frontier with Duane O’Kane, 7:30PM sharp, Unity of Vancouver, 5840 Oak Street @ 41st. Bring display ad this page for free admission. Info: www.clearmind.com

MAR 6-8

Introduction to Hand Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Friday Introduction 7:30PM, \$10; Course \$395 + GST. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 7-8

“Unleash Your Gifts” Workshop: A 2-day journey of discovering and exploring your hidden genius and passion. Discover the passion and genius you were meant to live. In Vancouver. Info/registration: www.planetbliss.ca

MAR 21-22

Lifeskills for the Highly Sensitive Person Workshop: Discover and release negative energy. Find your place of peace. Learn how to adapt and relax in your environment. Experience your full potential. \$250 earlybird. 9AM-4PM both days. To register, call Brenda 604-738-7957 or brenda@brendabarton.com www.brendabarton.com

APR 18-19

Become a Certified Life Coach or Executive Coach: This 2-day intensive will teach you everything you need to know to succeed. Only Certified Coaches Federation graduates earn the esteemed Certified Life Coach Practitioner designations. In Vancouver. 866-455-2155 or 403-389-1190. www.certifiedcoachesfederation.com

ONGOING

Grof Holotropic Breathwork Daylong Intensives: Breath as Sacred Medicine. \$125 earlybird. Vancouver (Feb 21, Mar 21), Victoria (Feb 29, Mar 28), Shawnigan Lake (Mar 7), OUR Ecovillage Retreat (Apr 17-19). Individual sessions. www.thesecretofbreath.com

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Building a neo-liberal Canada

It rules the world, but do you know what “neo-liberalism” really means? While rarely defined, often confused, misused and glossed over, understanding the term is basic to human interaction in the 21st century and the key to unlocking a different country and world.

After 40 years of tracking neoliberalism’s global rise, Donald Gutstein decided to help clear up any doubt and confusion by sharing his insights in a book. Happily, he uses our prime minister as a case study. *Harperism: How Stephen Harper and his Think Tank Colleagues Have Transformed Canada* (James Lorimer) has been published months ahead of what quite possibly will be the most important federal election ever.

Economic freedom is the highest good, trumping everything else, including political freedom... Neoliberalism describes Pinochet’s Chile, Thatcher’s UK, Reagan’s US, Harper’s Canada and others.

Dictionaries define neoliberalism as a modern, political-economic theory favouring free trade, privatization, minimal government regulation, lower taxes – especially for elites and corporations – and reduced social services.

As Gutstein reveals, in power, neoliberalism is much more sinister and calculated. More than a simple desire for smaller government and taxes, it’s an agenda and an ongoing, utopian dream. Heavily influenced by think tanks, neoliberalism broadcasts through a mainstream media echo chamber, constantly repeating the mantra that governments screw up and markets make better decisions.

Gutstein reports the concept began with Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992), whose ideas were the subject of Stephen Harper’s graduate thesis. Hayek’s Mont Pel-

erin Society, created in 1947, was the first right-wing think-tank, followed by hundreds more around the world, including Canada’s very familiar and influential Fraser Institute. Many more – as part of an international network – sprung up across the country, partially subsidized by taxpayers.

Often incorrectly referred to as a conservative movement, neoliberalism radically restructures existing society by creating more and more unregulated markets. In contrast to libertarians who want a small, less powerful government that leaves people alone, neoliberals actually require their own brand of strong government.

While conservatives strive to save what they believe is the best of the past, neoliberal governments focus on creating, enforcing and enabling markets to flourish, unhindered by constraints such as environmental concerns. Economic freedom is the highest good, trumping everything else, including political freedom. Transactions rule over elected officials. Government is needed, yes, but democracy not necessarily so. Neoliberalism describes Pinochet’s Chile, Thatcher’s UK, Reagan’s US, Harper’s Canada and others.


No matter how incredibly subtle, incremental and hidden from view our leader’s moves might be, he is gradually, but radically, re-forming Canada into a shape that will outlast his time in office, requiring decades to restore. That’s documented in Paul Wells’ bestseller, *The Longer I’m Prime Minister, Stephen Harper and Canada*, 2006–.

Filtering through neoliberal ideology also sheds light on Harper’s weakening of unions and free collective bargaining, muzzling government scientists, killing the Canadian Wheat Board, undermining the CBC and encouraging privatization of land on First Nations

reserves. He has eviscerated environmental protection and recast Canada as a “warrior nation” over its peacekeeping tradition, extolling the Tar Sands while turning his back on international climate initiatives and charging around the world to sign free-trade agreements. These issues and myriad other policies are examined in Michael Harris’ *Party of One*.

Gutstein, an adjunct professor in SFU’s School of Communication and co-director of NewsWatch Canada, provides astute, invaluable analysis as he dismantles and exposes the neoliberal labyrinth of corporate funded think tanks and interconnected corporate media. Most importantly, he also exposes the element of social control

in 10 years of Harper’s pro-market worldview.

Harperism: How Stephen Harper and his Think Tank Colleagues Have Transformed Canada is essential reading. Understanding its central thesis is important to every voter, including the mistaken 30+% who think they are supporting “conservatism,” not “neoliberalism.” It should be mandatory reading for anyone planning to not cast their precious ballot. It offers scary motivation, indeed, for all Canadians to get to the polls this fall. 



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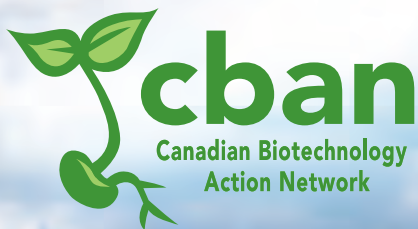


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